

1. (Amended) An [invention] arrangement for generating a security imprint comprising:

a security module containing a first program memory in which a first program is stored and a security module data processing unit connected to said first program memory and being programmed by said first program to calculate a multi-byte security code from existing system data and to be able to receive new system data to modify said existing system data;

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a separate data processing unit disposed externally of said security module and having a second program memory in which a second program is stored, said separate data processing unit being programmed by said second program to edit print data to compile a print image that contains said security code as a security imprint and that embodies a monetary value for franking a mail item; and

said security module data processing unit being further programmed by said first program to, immediately upon receipt of said new system data, validate said new system data and determine whether said new system data are required for said security code and, if so, to immediately begin recalculating said security code in a first routine and, in a second routine, to finish recalculating said security code for at least one security imprint, thereby producing a recalculated security code, and to initiate an accounting operation for said monetary value and to communicate the recalculated security code to said separate data processing unit.